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## Wild Weather Hampers Brisbane's Popular CityCat Services

**Jon Bunker** – Immediate Past National President, AITPM

The heavy rain falls that we have been experiencing have had their impact on the public transport system, especially the ferries.

September 2010 was the Brisbane area's wettest on record, and early to mid October has shaped up much the same. So much so that the South East Queensland's main water storages, the Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams, which are fed by the Stanley and Brisbane Rivers' upper catchments, have filled to capacity. SEQ Water consequently released the floodgates on the Wivenhoe Dam for the first time in almost a decade, with bipartisan support of State and Local Governments.

The Wivenhoe, being a flood mitigation dam as well as a water impoundment for the region's fresh water supply, needs to be partially "empty" to ensure that a major 1974 style flood is avoided. The effect of opening the floodgates has been in clear view, with river heights in the city reaches well and truly exceeding normal tidal levels over the first half of October. With the overflow pushing downstream towards Moreton Bay we have seen unusual flotsam in the Brisbane River including large logs, tyres, tree branches and more.

On Thursday 14 October the decision was made to suspend the popular TransLink/Brisbane City Council CityCat ferry services until the river returned to safe and navigable conditions. By Monday morning's peak period, services were back to normal.

During the suspension of CityCat and the iconic monohull CityFerry services, TransLink

effectively accommodated for passenger demand by augmenting bus services on routes running near or connecting with CityCat terminals.

Maritime safety is paramount and Brisbane's ferry services are no exception. Other events that have lead to a suspension of services have included thick fog and severe storms. The effective integration of transit services in the region ensures that any impacts on the travelling public are minimal.

The CityCat and CityFerry system includes 23 terminals, with 16 CityCat vessels and nine monohulls in operation. Patronage was 1.44 million trips for the 4th quarter 2009/2010. ([Link for more information](#) Page 5).

The ferries have a higher customer satisfaction level than bus and rail for "efficiency", "information" and "helpfulness of staff" ([Link for more information](#) P11 – P13).

Unusually, the CityCat's busiest day is actually Sunday. Many locals and visitors use it as a very inexpensive way to sightsee. ([Link for more information](#))

The CityCats are named from a list of local Aboriginal place names along the Brisbane River, as recorded by European settlers.

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